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Report of the Executive Director

Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

Summary

The present report responds to Executive Board decision 1995/5 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1) on annual reports to the Economic and Social Council, which sets out the format and content of that part of the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF to the Executive Board that also serves as the report to the Council.

It discusses UNICEF participation in follow-up to resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on: United Nations operational activities for development; the advancement of women and gender-related issues; follow-up to the major international conferences; the International year of Microcredit 2005; humanitarian and disaster relief assistance; the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World; and malaria and diarrhoeal diseases.

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I. Follow-up to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 of 22 December 1992, 50/120 of 20 December 1995 and 52/203 of 18 December 1997 and follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1997/59 of 11 July 1997 and 1998/42 of 31 July 1998: Operational activities of the United Nations for International Development Cooperation: Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/27 of 28 July 1998: Reporting of the United Nations funds and programmes to the Economic and Social Council

1. When the present report was finalized, in late October 1998, the General Assembly had not yet considered the triennial policy review of operational activities for development. The resolution representing the outcome of that deliberation will shape the context and relevance of the issues discussed in this chapter.

2. Because UNICEF participated in the conduct of the Secretary-General's review (A/53/226) and in the development of its recommendations, measures taken by UNICEF to implement the recommendations of the triennial policy review during 1998 were reflected in the Secretary-General's report. Therefore, including a substantive progress report in the present document would duplicate those efforts. UNICEF will resume detailed reporting on follow-up to the triennial policy review following the 1999 session of the Economic and Social Council, addressing, *inter alia*, implementation of the policy directions established by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

3. In considering the triennial policy review, the General Assembly is expected to discuss the steps taken by the United Nations system to implement the Secretary-General's reforms. The present report, therefore, focuses on the ongoing implementation of the Secretary-General's reform measures, particularly major aspects where further work is required. While there has been substantial and timely progress, the Executive Director is seeking the views of the Executive Board on issues that remain under active discussion, as referenced below.

A. United Nations Development Assistance Framework

4. UNICEF continued to chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Sub-group on Programme Policies, the entity responsible for developing the pilot phase of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). As of early October 1998, 10 of 18 country teams in the pilot countries had completed draft and/or final reports. UNDG had developed a support system consisting of seven facilitators, who were available to provide field-level support to country teams, and 70 focal points from members of UNDG, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO), who were available to respond immediately to requests for information and support.

5. The specialized agencies and Bretton Woods institutions were invited to take part in the pilot phase and in nearly all cases full country teams participated actively and constructively. Two countries, Mali and Viet Nam, were selected for further review of the interface between the UNDAF and the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy.

6. An assessment team made up of representatives from the United Nations, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), in addition to an independent review panel or three external high-level experts - independent of the United Nations but familiar with the issues - have completed their respective assessments of the pilot phase. In addition, UNICEF carried out its own internal assessment of progress to date. These assessments were part of a major review of the UNDAF process carried out in the last week of September with participation by UNDG members, specialized agencies, inter-agency bodies, three country teams and Governments.

7. While it was too early to evaluate UNDAF effectiveness in improving country-level programmatic impact, the following conclusions were possible:

(a) The UNDAF should be a strategic instrument - the primary United Nations instrument for responding to national priorities and development challenges, prepared with the full and active participation of Governments and having their concurrence;

(b) The global agenda emerging from the major international conferences should provide the core of the UNDAF agenda, always in support of country- specific needs and priorities;

(c) The UNDAF requires a clear statement of host government priorities, as set out in the country strategy note, where it exists, or in national development plans;

(d) The country team should prepare a Common Country Assessment (CCA) prior to, and as the basis for, the UNDAF. Completion of the UNDAF, in turn, should precede development of country programmes by individual agencies.

8. The review concluded that the UNDAF should be extended in a phased manner, with all countries expected to have begun the process within three years. In keeping with the country-driven nature of the process, implementation should proceed in a flexible manner. The expansion needs certain phased and progressive preparatory steps to ensure success: (a) harmonized programme cycles; and (b) the preparation of a quality CCA, including a common information base.

9. No clearly defined conclusions have been reached for some issues, which UNDG continues to address. They include the need for full and active participation of Governments and the involvement of the specialized agencies. Although UNICEF traditionally has developed its programmes of cooperation with a range of partners from government ministries, a number of other United Nations agencies - because of their mandates and the nature of their work - tend to collaborate primarily with a single government ministry. Since the UNDAF requires the full and active participation of Governments, as well as their concurrence, it will be necessary to identify those authorities within Governments of programme countries with overall competence and responsibility for a global framework. A broader range of partners within government and civil society will need to be brought into the UNDAF preparatory process and the United Nations country team will have to liaise with this range of partners.

10. While the specialized agencies and Bretton Woods institutions participated in pilot phase UNDAFs at the country level and their headquarters were kept informed through the ACC process, there is no mechanism for their formal participation or adherence to the UNDAF framework and their Executive Boards have not been fully involved.

11. While General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 called for harmonization of programme cycles by 2000 and letters to this effect were sent to field representatives in 1993 and 1995, progress has been mixed. Only 38 countries currently have full harmonization of programme cycles. Even when achieved, harmonization has not always been sustained. With decentralized authority for programme preparation, a variety of occurrences have led to one or more agencies advancing or deferring the preparation of a new country programme while others remained with the original cycle. Emergencies, changed country situations, significant shortfalls in resources, new programme priorities and requests of government ministries are among the more frequent reasons.

12. The heads of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP have sent a joint letter to field representatives asking country teams to draw up an action plan for accelerating harmonization. UNDG has established a system to monitor the progress of action plans, with country teams reporting on achievement and sustainability through the annual reports of the resident coordinator system.

13. The pilot countries have shown that preparing UNDAFs requires substantial staff time and entails additional expense. Although some earmarked funding was provided by donor Governments during the pilot phase, this was not disbursed to all participating funds and programmes. While full operation of new mechanisms and structures will allow for elimination of some of the existing instruments and there are certain time-consuming, "one-time" activities, it is possible that there will be a net increase in personnel time and budgetary expenditures required to service the coordination machinery in the field. It will be important for the process to show a net benefit to programming, either through increased efficiency or through reduced operation/transaction costs.

14. While common frameworks allow for greater complementarity between agencies' programmes, they have created greater dependency by UNICEF representatives on the work of other agencies. The effectiveness of individual country programmes could be compromised by poor performance in a linked "upstream" or "downstream" activity being implemented by another agency.

B. The resident coordinator system

15. There has been considerable progress in strengthening the resident coordinator system, helping to ensure that it is indeed representative of the United Nations system. While the work in this area is ongoing, key elements introduced during the past year include the development of a job description; an improved selection process, including the establishment of an inter-agency advisory panel and formal consultation among the UNDG Executive Committee heads on each nomination; new performance evaluation criteria; a wider pool of candidates; and the development of a UNDG culture. UNDG, working with a private sector corporation, has developed a model of competency assessment which will apply to all candidates for the 1999 selection.

16. Over the past year, some 30 per cent of those named to resident coordinator posts came from agencies other than UNDP, including three UNICEF staff who currently are serving as resident coordinators. UNICEF participates in the briefing of first-time resident coordinators/representatives and UNDGO participates in the briefing of new UNICEF representatives. UNDG continues to consider ways of creating a wider sense of ownership.

17. While the legislative mandates provided by the General Assembly have reaffirmed that the UNDP resident representative would "normally" be designated resident coordinator, there are a small but significant number of cases when exceptions to this practice could strengthen the United Nations presence. These include situations where there is no UNDP presence; complex emergencies where the resident/humanitarian coordination function could be separate from that of the resident representative; development situations where coordination demands a full-time presence; and countries where one agency has a dominant presence and/or role and coordination is not a full-time function.

C. United Nations Development Group

18. The creation of UNDG has resulted in a dramatic acceleration in the pace of implementation of reform measures. UNDG, with its permanent secretariat, frequent meetings and active participation by executive heads, is now characterized by action and rapid decision-making.

19. While implementation of the new headquarters instruments and structures of UNDG must be considered a great success, these improvements have had their cost: other United Nations agencies, while fully engaged in implementing the triennial policy review recommendations, in some cases may have developed a sense of disenfranchisement, the result of a perceived lack of direct participation in the decision-making process. Even though the members and secretariats of UNDG and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions now discuss issues frequently, meet between formal sessions and participate in each others' working groups, this possibility remains.

20. In addition, establishing and servicing UNDG, UNDGO, the UNDG Support Group and the structure of some seven subgroups have required a significant input of time and personnel of the participating organizations. While it is expected that full implementation of new mechanisms and structures will allow for elimination of some of the existing instruments and there are certain time-consuming "one-time" activities, it is possible that there will be a net increase in personnel time required to service the headquarters coordination machinery.

II. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1998/26 of 28 July 1998: Advancement of women: Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting, in particular, capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development, and 1998/43 of 31 July 1998: Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

21. The resolutions of the Economic and Social Council have served to reinforce the UNICEF commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Gender equality is central to the rights-based approach adopted as the framework for UNICEF policies and programmes. Programme guidance materials on the rights-based approach currently under development will refer specifically to supporting implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

as an integral part of country programmes. The gender-based rights perspective has already resulted in a reorientation of strategies for the achievement of specific programme goals. For example, women's rights to health and a good life are used as a framework for designing programmes for maternal mortality reduction so they address violence against women and genital mutilation. The principle of non-discrimination and universality of children's rights calls for strengthening family and community capacities to ensure that girls' development needs and rights are met from early childhood to adolescence.

22. Concrete measures towards gender mainstreaming in UNICEF policies and programmes include the adoption of the Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework; the articulation of gender-specific goals and strategies in national plans and country programmes; the development and implementation of a systematic strategy for capacity-building among staff and national counterparts; building and sustaining gender networks; developing programme guidance materials; and monitoring gender as a cross-cutting concern at all levels of the organization's work. The gender dimension is fully integrated into the guidelines for preparation of the CCA and the UNDAF.

23. A recent review of UNICEF experiences in capacity-building and gender training concluded that although more than 1,200 staff and 9,000 national counterparts have undergone training in some 250 workshops, gaps remain in consistent translation of global concepts into practical, country-level programming strategies for gender. The review highlighted the need for simple guidance materials outlining practical measures for gender mainstreaming at all stages of the country programming process; consistent commitment and compliance for integration; and effective monitoring of results.

24. The establishment of global and regional networks of UNICEF gender focal points and experts is an essential dimension of gender policy. The internal gender network currently comprises 84 gender focal points, including those in regional offices, each of which has designated two full-time gender advisors. Regional networks meet at least once a year, *inter alia*, to identify priorities for joint action. Headquarters provides technical support and policy guidance to all regional and field offices. There are annual meetings of gender focal points to review programme experiences and to define emerging areas for action.

25. To provide practical guidance for operational mainstreaming of gender issues, a programmer's handbook is under preparation and will be field-tested early in 1999. The handbook outlines steps for mainstreaming gender in the different stages of the country programming process from the rights perspective and in accordance with the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions on gender. In addition, UNICEF has prepared special materials for gender mainstreaming in sectoral programmes. In 1998, a handbook for mainstreaming gender in water and environmental sanitation was completed. Resource materials are being prepared on integrating a gender perspective into guidelines on maternal mortality reduction and into emergencies.

26. As part of the follow-up to the Graça Machel study on the impact of armed conflict on children, UNICEF is preparing resource materials and methodologies for the training of peacekeepers. The documentation of best practices in gender mainstreaming and programmes for women and girls is underway and a compilation of 20 country and regional experiences will be ready by mid-1999. These materials will contribute to the work of the Inter-Agency Committee for Women and Gender Equality.

27. Field offices have taken initiatives to develop special materials and methodologies. An Arabic multi-media version of the gender training package will be ready by the end of 1998. The shift of governance and development planning to decentralized levels has resulted in UNICEF supporting local adaptations of materials and the mobilization of such partners as women's rights activists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), administrators and practitioners in, for example, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam.

28. In the preparation of the situation analysis, there is increasing emphasis on the problems faced by women and the investigation of their causes, determinants and implications. This approach makes explicit such factors as the conditions of inequality and vulnerability of special groups of children and women; the adequacy of legal frameworks and policy response to these conditions; and the provision of basic social services. Financial and programme monitoring systems now include codes for reporting on gender mainstreaming activities. Gender-specific indicators will be integral to the global monitoring of progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children.

29. Following the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Executive Board endorsed UNICEF proposals for support to the follow-up of the implementation of the Platform for Action, identifying the three priority areas of girls' education; the health of girls, adolescent girls and women; and children's and women's rights. At the country level, follow-up actions often complement follow-up to the other world conferences, particularly the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)and the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD). Girls' education is considered a particularly important priority for UNICEF. As the 1999 *State of the World's Children Report: Education* emphasizes, it is one of the five key elements required to ensure Education for All (EFA). It is an area, therefore, in which UNICEF is investing resources and energy.

30. Support for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action has provided new opportunities for advocacy and programmes in general. New initiatives for addressing the needs and rights of adolescent girls are underway. In the area of children's and women's rights, the focus is on alliance-building among Governments, NGOs, activists and treaty bodies around the common issues of health, education, participation, discrimination in family law and inheritance and violence in families. In many countries, UNICEF continues to assist in the review and development of legal frameworks, legal literacy materials and creating opportunities for dialogue on women's and children's rights within the community and other social policy arenas.

31. UNICEF will be an active participant in the mid-decade review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in June 2000. In addition, a more detailed report on mainstreaming of gender in UNICEF programmes will be presented to the Executive Board at its annual session in June 1999.

III. Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

32. The year 1998 saw both the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the implementation review of the Vienna Declaration and

Programme of Action. The Programme of Action recognized that the human rights of children constitute a priority for United Nations system-wide action. In almost every article there is reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Vienna Declaration recommended that United Nations bodies and specialized agencies periodically assess the impact of their strategies and policies on the enjoyment of human rights and called for the situation and human rights of children to be reviewed and monitored by all in accordance with their mandates. UNICEF work is based on child and human rights and the organization is continuously learning as rights are incorporated into its work. All UNICEF efforts in this area are carried out in close collaboration with other United Nations agencies and many civil society partners.

33. UNICEF is adopting the multiple indicator cluster survey for future sustainable monitoring of the situation of children and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF is collaborating with Childwatch International to involve Governments and civil society in national monitoring and is producing a monitoring and evaluation training package.

34. UNICEF has supported the Committee on the Rights of the Child, participating in the consideration of reports of States Parties, providing advice, submitting reports on implementation and responding to requests for technical advice and assistance. Technical and financial support are provided to initiatives and strategies that address legislative, policy and programmatic child rights issues. In accordance with the Vienna Declaration, UNICEF has promoted advocacy and awareness campaigns on children's and human rights.

35. UNICEF country programmes are central to its efforts to implement the Vienna Declaration, focusing in particular on non-discrimination, the best interests of children, childhood disabilities, the rights of the girl child and community participation in the identification of problems and solutions. UNICEF has promoted birth registration, helped to improve the quality of juvenile justice and promoted the human rights aspects of elections. UNICEF has focused on programmes providing sanitation and water, health services, working against the spread of HIV/AIDS and addressing female genital mutilation. UNICEF has supported gender-sensitive practices, textbooks and materials and developed programmes appropriate to education in emergencies. Programmes to support children in need of special protection have focused on children in emergencies, refugee and internally displaced children, child labour and children subject to abuse and sexual exploitation.

IV. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/44 of 31 July 1998: Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

36. Following completion of the work of the three inter-agency task forces established by ACC (on basic social services for all, an enabling environment for economic and social development, and full employment and sustainable livelihoods) and with input from the Inter-Agency Committee for Women and Gender Equality, an inter-agency workshop held in Turin, Italy in December 1997 established country-level arrangements for follow-up to the global conferences and summits. The resultant Guidance Note for the Resident Coordinator System, formally adopted as an ACC statement in March 1998, sets out appropriate guidance to the resident coordinator system for

United Nations agencies to maximize their collective system-wide contribution to Governments in the implementation of the various programmes of action. While Governments retain their primary responsibility for implementation, the guidelines are intended to ensure the coherent and integrated support of the United Nations system.

37. The key action points covered in the ACC statement include situation analysis; policy dialogue; programming frameworks; mainstreaming gender; human rights; institutional frameworks; multiple entry points; wider constituencies; reporting; analytical frameworks, statistics and indicators; and best practices. All UNICEF representatives received the Guidance Note in May 1998. The note was sent to all agencies in the field by their respective heads, thereby providing a set of common programming instructions for all United Nations field offices.

38. The provisional UNDAF guidelines also help field offices and the United Nations country team to support Governments because UNDAF is to serve as a basis for follow-up at country level to recent international conferences and decisions of the General Assembly. UNICEF will monitor and evaluate the success of conference follow-up through the annual reports of country offices, which will be prepared according to new guidelines that were circulated to all field offices in September 1998. Under these guidelines, field offices are required to provide an analytical update of country-level conference follow-up and implementation of United Nations reform. UNICEF as a member of the country team, will participate in the preparation of the report on the resident coordinator system for each country, which will include a section on conference follow-up.

39. UNICEF approaches to conference follow-up were largely country-driven, so that the quality, consistency and comparability of reporting has varied widely. Because the recent ACC guidelines provide consistent and comparable analysis and reporting on the integrated follow-up to conferences, they will allow for a more complete overview of results achieved and partnerships developed, as well as the more effective sharing of best practices.

40. In addition to the country-level activities, in 1998 there were also significant activities that have a global perspective or an inter-agency dimension, as described below.

A. World Summit for Social Development

41. A key aspect of UNICEF support for follow-up to WSSD is the 20/20 Initiative. The Initiative could benefit countries encountering difficulties in achieving some WSSD goals because the resources allocated to basic social services are inadequate for achieving universal coverage within the agreed time frame. Given the current level of global spending, it may be unrealistic to expect that the targets agreed at WSSD and in the policy statement of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Shaping the 21st Century", for under-five and maternal mortality, child malnutrition and basic education, will be achieved in all countries by 2000 or even early in the next century.

42. UNICEF, in collaboration with UNDP, has supported 20/20 studies in some 30 countries in an effort to improve their monitoring of the level, equity and efficiency of public spending and aid allocations to basic social services. Undertaken largely by national experts, the studies addressed three main questions: (a) the amount being spent on basic social services; (b) who benefits from subsidies in these services; and (c) the scope for efficiency improvements. Regional seminars were organized in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to review findings and

promote intergovernmental networks of 20/20 experts and policy makers. UNICEF has supported the repositioning of the Initiative by renewing emphasis on the equity and efficiency dimensions of public spending and official development assistance allocated to basic social services.

43. The regional seminars also supported preparations for the intergovernmental meeting on the implementation of the 20/20 Initiative, held in Hanoi, Viet Nam in October 1998 and co-sponsored by the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway and Viet Nam. As the lead agency for the Initiative within the United Nations system, UNICEF involved all relevant agencies in the preparation of the meeting.

B. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

44. UNICEF contributed to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in a number of ways, including a collaborative assessment, with the World Wide Fund for Nature, of India's freshwater resources and the implications of their scarcity for women and children. UNICEF prepared several background papers on freshwater which served as the basis for the Harare Declaration, highlighting the importance of environmental sanitation.

45. Together with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and on behalf of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, UNICEF organized the 1998 World Water Day on the theme of "Groundwater – the invisible and endangered resource". In accordance with Agenda 21, UNICEF convened a global workshop on environmental sanitation in June, which was a critical step in boosting global efforts to promote sanitation and hygiene education through partnerships and cooperation. Following the Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and the United Nations Environmental Programme, two publications, on lead poisoning and pesticides, were prepared for distribution at country level.

C. International Conference on Population and Development

46. UNICEF continues sustained action to ensure that the ICPD goals remain central to its country programmes. The rights-based programming approach has led to discussions with legal experts and NGOs active in the areas of children's and women's rights to identify ways in which the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women can be applied to support achievement of the ICPD goals.

47. The prevention of maternal mortality and morbidity is now the primary focus of UNICEF-supported activities in support of ICPD follow-up. Activities are directed towards increasing the age of marriage or of first pregnancy among adolescents and young women, improving the health and nutrition of girls and women and improving the care and services available to pregnant women. Programme strategies include life skills education for adolescents; expanding access to quality prenatal, delivery and post-natal care; promoting professional attendance at deliveries; improving the quality of neonatal care; improving the nutrition of adolescent girls and pregnant women; providing essential care for women with complications; raising awareness and preventing HIV/AIDS infection; and community-based activities to involve men and communities in providing essential services to reduce the risk of maternal mortality.

48. In response to the ICPD call for access by all to reproductive health care by 2015, UNICEF has undertaken provision of quality maternal and neonatal care, including nutritional

supplementation; the prevention and management of sexually transmitted diseases; protection against sexual violence; and health education for adolescents. Efforts are being made to improve the quality and availability of maternal health services, to provide a basic minimum standard of care and to ensure that they are "mother-friendly".

49. UNICEF is an active participant in preparations for the five-year review of ICPD ("ICPD+5"), sharing its experiences in programme policies, the development of effective strategies, programme implementation and monitoring and evaluation. UNICEF is participating in the roundtables and technical meetings organized by UNFPA as part of its plan for a comprehensive review of the implementation of the programme of action. As part of the review, UNICEF is preparing monographs on infant and child mortality and girls' education.

50. The forums in which UNICEF has participated include the Task Force for Basic Social Services for All, which deliberated on the implementation of activities related to the ICPD Programme of Action; the roundtable on adolescent sexual and reproductive health; the roundtable on reproductive rights; the roundtable on the role and participation of civil society; the roundtable on reproductive health services in emergency situations; a conference by the group, Health, Empowerment, Rights and Accountability (known as HERA), on partnerships; and the Bellagio roundtable on population and macroeconomic linkages. UNICEF expects to participate in the Hague International Forum and the Budapest regional meeting on population.

D. World Food Summit

51. As a partner in accelerating implementation of the right to food, UNICEF is involved in drafting a code of conduct on the right to adequate food, an effort led by the Food First Information and Action Group. UNICEF also chaired the working group on nutrition, ethics and human rights at the 1998 session of the ACC Subcommittee on Nutrition (SCN), at which the right to food was central to inter-agency discussions. UNICEF continues as lead agency for the preparation of the 1999 SCN symposium, "The substance and politics of a human rights approach to food and nutrition policies and programming", to be hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

52. UNICEF is also an active member of the Inter-agency Working Group on the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Mapping System, formed specifically to follow-up the World Food Summit and coordinated by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. The objective of this group is to identify food-insecure and vulnerable populations and to determine the degree and causes of vulnerability. UNICEF is also a partner in the African Nutrition Database Initiative. Currently in the planning and design stages, these initiatives will involve regional and country offices.

E. World Conference on Education for All

53. At a meeting in March 1998, the heads of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as a Vice-President of the World Bank, agreed on preparations for a major end-of-decade assessment of progress towards the EFA goals. Preparations will include regional policy review seminars, and reports and other arrangements for the fourth global meeting of the EFA Forum in 2000. The overall objective is to combine an appraisal of progress with forward-looking strategic planning.

54. In its own programming, UNICEF has made girls' education a key element of its strategy to support EFA. In May 1998, UNICEF, along with the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development, co-sponsored an international conference on girls' education which emphasized the key support and partnership role of the private sector and religious organizations.

55. Since 1993, UNICEF has mobilized over $60 million to support girls' education activities in some 50 countries. They include, for example, a pilot programme to strengthen indigenous African NGOs as part of the move to work more broadly with civil society. Throughout this programme, UNICEF is committed to access and completion of quality education for all children and to sustainability by developing gender-sensitive education systems.

56. In 1998, UNICEF reaffirmed its commitment to early childhood care for development (ECCD) and is putting greater emphasis on this initiative than in the past. Education and learning are key elements in the intersectoral approach to ECCD. UNICEF views education as a key strategy and mechanism to protect the most vulnerable children from the many forms of exploitation, including child labour, sexual exploitation and involvement in conflict situations.

F. Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

57. UNICEF activities to follow-up the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) emphasize the mainstreaming of urban children into the broader context of UNICEF programmes, focusing on the most vulnerable children and the previously unreached, many of whom live in urban slums and squatter settlements. Global activities include ongoing collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). At the International Forum on Urban Poverty, organized by Habitat, the City of Florence and the International Child Development Centre, UNICEF focused on setting guidelines for programmes relating to urban children and their appropriate monitoring. As part of the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative, UNICEF is working with municipalities to develop plans of action for children and to influence municipal laws.

58. UNICEF is completing a resource book for local authorities, municipal staff, NGOs and United Nations field staff, to aid the development of urban programming strategies for poor children and their communities that are based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

G. Special session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities

59. UNICEF is following up the Declaration of the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction adopted at the special session with a renewed focus on demand-side activities and on young people, working with key partners within the overall context of young people's health and development.

60. UNICEF participated in the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, held in Lisbon, Portugal in August 1998. Working with the United Nations Joint and Co-sponsored

Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNFPA and the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF promoted inclusion in the Lisbon Declaration, in addition to references to illicit drugs, reference to tobacco and the abuse of alcohol – both of which undermine the health and development of children and young people.

61. UNICEF continues to strengthen its collaboration with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other partners at the headquarters, country and regional levels. UNICEF is joining WHO, the World Bank and other partners in a major initiative focusing on tobacco, "Building alliances and taking action for a generation of tobacco-free children and youth".

V. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/28 of 29 July 1998: International Year of Microcredit 2005

62. UNICEF has integrated microcredit into its programmes in countries where a lack of access to small loans has been identified as a key obstacle to improving the situation of women and children. UNICEF is working with communities, NGOs, and Governments to stimulate national efforts to expand microcredit for poor women; advocate the allocation of adequate resources to two areas for reducing poverty – small loans and basic social services – in order to maximize their synergies and impact; and monitor and evaluate its support to microcredit to improve its effectiveness and contribute to the dissemination of best practices, with a view to ensuring a sustainable reduction of poverty.

63. UNICEF has supported microcredit programmes in many countries including Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Nepal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam. Recent evaluations carried out in several of these countries have shown that microcredit has improved the well-being of borrowers and their children and that the impact is greatest where credit is combined with support for access to basic social services.

VI. Follow-up to special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance: Agreed conclusions

64. UNICEF has supported the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict through country-level briefings and logistical support, and has implemented and followed-up the agreements reached by the Special Representative with parties to conflicts in Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone and the Sudan. UNICEF field offices have carried out advocacy efforts initiated by the Special Representative.

65. The gender perspective is now fully integrated into humanitarian activities and policies. The following recent activities have enhanced the UNICEF response to gender concerns in complex emergencies: (a) development of a training package on the rights of the child from a gender perspective for peace-keeping forces; (b) a study on the gender dimension of internal displacement, with recommendations for follow-up and practical strategies; and (c) as part of the humanitarian principles training package, training of staff and partners in gender concerns in complex emergencies, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation.

66. UNICEF has strongly advocated the early ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction

and representatives received instructions on approaching Governments. The treaty has received the required 40 instruments of ratification. UNICEF is the focal point for landmine awareness training and has been preparing guidelines on the development of training in this field.

67. The adoption of a policy on the UNICEF response to internally displaced women and children was followed by study on the gender dimension of internal displacement and the development of best practices for children in such situations. UNICEF was strongly involved in the inter-agency processes for developing a best practices manual and the establishment of a global database on internally displaced persons with the help of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

68. UNICEF has made its Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) more flexible to be able to provide funds rapidly following natural disasters. Typically, women and children suffer most heavily from natural disasters, as they rely strongly on the social and infrastructures which are disrupted in these situations. Recently, EPF has been used to respond to natural disasters in Bangladesh, China, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

69. A meeting of UNICEF representatives from countries facing emergencies held in Martigny, Switzerland in August, focused on making the UNICEF response to emergencies more predictable. A process of developing core capabilities was initiated, with a focus on places and countries of origin, to allow people to stay in the location where they come from, but also to allow for an early return. The development of core capabilities will make a significant contribution to the ability of UNICEF to advocate and addressing the social aspects of the gap between relief and development by ensuring basic services. In developing the Consolidated Appeals Process, UNICEF has worked to make the appeals more prioritized and focused on action. However, to make the UNICEF emergency response more predictable for allies and the beneficiaries, it also becomes important to have a predictable resource base.

70. The coordination mechanisms of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have been strengthened, in particular in situations where humanitarian principles and human rights have been at stake. UNICEF has been actively involved in the inter-agency process of developing principles of engagement applicable in complex emergencies. In negotiating continued access in such countries as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and the Sudan, UNICEF provided input based on the rights of the child. This effort is particularly important in advocacy, given that today's conflicts make women and children not only the victims but also the targets of warfare. Children's rights are being violated through recruitment and abduction of children, the presence of land-mines, displacement and the systematic discrimination against girls in terms of access to education and health care. Strategic frameworks have been developed among United Nations agencies to allow for aid to become more principled in complex emergencies. Several UNICEF staff are now working as resident and humanitarian coordinators.

71. In terms of improving staff security, UNICEF has worked to increase preparedness and safety measures during emergency operations at all levels of the organization, from headquarters to the field. In 1999, a number of training initiatives will enhance further staff security in the field.

VII. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1998/31 of 29 July 1998: International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and 1998/37 of 30 July 1998: International Year for the Culture of Peace, 2000

72. UNICEF is working with UNESCO and others to promote a culture of peace to counteract the uncertainties brought about by war and armed conflict, economic recession and the adverse effects of globalization, rapid population growth and increasing environmental deterioration. While peace education has been viewed largely as an activity for children in post-conflict situations, UNICEF is advocating that knowledge about other groups, such values as tolerance and acceptance of diversity and such skills as conflict resolution are critical life skills which must permeate any curriculum. Children need to learn the skills necessary to understanding the richness of diversities, whether of religion, ethnic background, identity or ideas. There is also a crucial role for the family; family life that is based on patriarchal and autocratic approaches will have a negative effect on the upbringing of children, which schools and the community will have little effect in counteracting.

VIII. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/36 of 30 July 1998: Malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, in particular cholera

73. UNICEF is committed to the acceleration of malaria control programmes, with a special focus on Africa, and is carrying out activities in collaboration with Governments, other United Nations agencies, particularly UNDP, WHO and the World Bank, and with communities and NGOs. The overall aim is the reduction of mortality and morbidity due to malaria in children under five years of age and among women. Currently, UNICEF supports malaria control programmes in 32 countries, 27 of them in Africa.

74. UNICEF will intensify support to the global "Roll Back Malaria Programme" through its country programmes, working with WHO and other partners to strengthen government and community efforts. The main focus of UNICEF support will be on: special attention to reducing the toll of malaria on young children and pregnant women; strengthened support for community-based and local action to improve health and nutrition; making insecticide-treated mosquito nets available to all families that need them; ensuring that every child with malaria has access to early and effective drug treatment; mobilizing community, district and national leaders to make effective malaria control a major priority; and strengthening government capacities to put into effect sustainable malaria control programmes, with the participation of communities, NGOs and the private sector.